Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir
doi: 10.26811/xxxx.xxxx.xxxx

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND TRANSFORMATIONAL-SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS: A CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR MADRASAHS

Hariadi
Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram

Correspondence Email: hariadijane97@gmail.com

Received: 2026-10-11	**Accepted:** 2026-11-15	**Published:** 2026-11-21

Abstract

Madrasah institutions in Indonesia stand at the intersection of religious tradition and the accountability demands of modern educational management, yet the mechanisms that turn this tension into measurable management effectiveness remain conceptually underspecified. This article builds an integrative conceptual model explaining how madrasah governance can move from figure-based, charisma-dependent compliance toward system-based accountability. Using a qualitative library-research design, sources from Sinta- and Scopus-indexed journals, Ministry of Religious Affairs policy documents, and foundational management texts were selected and analyzed through thematic synthesis across five lenses: the Competing Values Framework, Transformational Leadership Theory, Career Construction Theory, the psychological-safety literature, and quality-assurance instruments (EDM and e-RKAM). The synthesis indicates that organizational culture transition, transformational-spiritual leadership, and teacher career adaptability operate as interdependent rather than additive determinants of management effectiveness, conditioned by how far spiritual values are formalized into transparent procedures without losing their transcendent meaning. Five propositions are advanced, with practical recommendations for madrasah administrators, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and foundation boards. The article closes with testable hypotheses and multi-site mixed-methods designs for future validation, and acknowledges the evidentiary limits of a literature-based synthesis.

Keywords: *organizational culture; transformational leadership; educational management effectiveness; madrasah; career adaptability.*

A. Introduction

Islamic educational institutions occupy a distinctive position within Indonesia's national education system, tasked simultaneously with cultivating academic competitiveness and instilling religious character in learners. Historically, madrasah governance has rested on values of devotion (khidmah), simplicity, and personal loyalty to a kiai or foundation leader rather than on codified operating procedures (Miftahussurur et al., 2025). This value-based inheritance remains a genuine institutional asset: it supplies moral legitimacy, communal cohesion, and a transcendent sense of purpose that few purely administrative systems can replicate. At the same time, this inheritance can become a structural liability when personal loyalty substitutes for measurable performance criteria, leaving decisions on promotion, workload distribution, and budget allocation vulnerable to subjective bias (Miftahussurur et al., 2025).

Within this broader landscape, a substantial body of research has examined organizational culture and educational leadership in Islamic schools individually. Work on value-based culture shows that religiosity, discipline, and communal solidarity, once internalized into daily school routines, strengthen teacher professionalism and collective ownership of institutional quality (T. Amalia & Subiyantoro, 2025). Complementary studies on leadership in Islamic secondary schools demonstrate that principals who model trust, collaboration, and continuous learning cultivate a culture that in turn sustains pedagogical innovation, producing a cyclical rather than a linear relationship between leadership and culture (Efendi, 2025). A parallel stream of research documents how the internalization of Islamic values through instructional leadership strengthens disciplinary culture when read through Schein's layered model of artifacts, espoused values, and underlying assumptions (Schein, 2010). Systematic reviews of religious-culture management further report that school-leader modeling and habituation practices such as collective worship are the most frequently cited levers of character formation across the Islamic education literature (Hadi & Prayogi, 2025). Despite these findings, the integration of spiritual dimensions into formal governance frameworks remains largely

underdeveloped, with many institutions struggling to balance traditional religious authority with contemporary administrative accountability (Hidayat et al., 2025). This disconnect is further exacerbated by an "Islamic value-practice gap," where noble principles are invoked in official rhetoric but fail to permeate the structural and decision-making mechanisms of the institution (Mawardi et al., 2026). Bridging this divide requires transitioning from charisma-dependent governance toward an organizational model where spiritual principles, such as shura (consultation) and amanah (trustworthiness), are codified into rigorous administrative protocols (Miskanik & Hafsah, 2026). This shift demands a strategic alignment of modern management tools such as SWOT analysis and performance metrics with these core Islamic ethics, ensuring that institutional governance remains both professional and spiritually grounded. Consequently, leadership in this context necessitates a blend of technical expertise and behavioral competencies to ensure that spiritual values effectively permeate the organizational structure (Said et al., 2023; Tamsiyati et al., 2025).

Despite this accumulation of evidence, three gaps persist. First, most existing studies treat organizational culture and leadership as parallel rather than jointly determining constructs, leaving underexplored how the two interact with a third, individually held resource: the career adaptability of teaching staff who must personally absorb the uncertainty of precarious employment status, particularly the large population of honorary (non-civil-servant) teachers in madrasah settings. Second, the literature on culture transition in Islamic education tends to describe what a quality-oriented culture looks like more thoroughly than it explains how an institution moves from a compliance culture anchored in a single authority figure to one anchored in transparent, replicable systems, a transition that Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs has attempted to operationalize through digital self-evaluation and budgeting instruments (Firda et al., 2025). Third, integrative conceptual work that connects Islamic organizational values with established secular management theory, such as Total Quality Management and the Competing Values Framework, remains comparatively recent and

still calls explicitly for further theoretical elaboration before it can support empirical testing (Hidayati, 2025; Pujianto et al., 2025).

This article addresses these gaps by constructing an integrative conceptual model of educational management effectiveness in madrasah institutions, one that treats organizational-culture transition, transformational-spiritual leadership, and teacher career adaptability as interacting rather than independent determinants, and that further incorporates the psychological-safety literature to explain why a punitive response to error suppresses the very innovation that culture-transition policies are meant to enable (Edmondson, 1999). The review does not report new field data; instead, it synthesizes peer-reviewed literature, Ministry of Religious Affairs policy documents, and foundational organizational theory into a coherent set of theoretical propositions intended to guide future empirical inquiry. In pursuit of this aim, the article proceeds by describing the library-research method used to select and synthesize sources, presenting the five theoretical domains and the propositions that link them, discussing theoretical and practical implications together with the limitations of a literature-based synthesis, and concluding with directions for subsequent empirical research. By framing these variables as an interdependent system, this study seeks to move beyond fragmented analyses that isolate religious values from contemporary governance mandates, such as public accountability and technological integration (Arifin & Arsyada, 2025). Moreover, it addresses the critical need to bridge secular governance frameworks which emphasize administrative accountability and standardized performance with the unique, culturally embedded leadership practices of Islamic institutions, such as shura (consultation) and amanah (trustworthiness) (Suyatman et al., 2026).

B. Method

This article uses a qualitative library-research design, also referred to as a conceptual or narrative-integrative review, rather than a primary empirical study. No interviews, surveys, or field observations were conducted, and all substantive claims are attributed to previously published

sources. This design was chosen because the objective is to construct a conceptual bridge between organizational-culture theory, transformational-leadership theory, and career-adaptability theory as applied to madrasah governance, for which a synthesis of existing literature is the appropriate method.

Sources were identified through structured searches of Google Scholar, Sinta, and publicly accessible journal repositories using combinations of the terms organizational culture, transformational leadership, spiritual leadership, career adaptability, psychological safety, Total Quality Management, madrasah, and Islamic education management, together with the Indonesian equivalents budaya organisasi, kepemimpinan transformasional, adaptabilitas karier, and evaluasi diri madrasah. Inclusion prioritized peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2018 and 2026 in outlets indexed in Sinta or Scopus, official Ministry of Religious Affairs policy and guidance documents, and foundational management or psychology texts (for example, on the four dimensions of transformational leadership or the four archetypes of the Competing Values Framework) whose constructs are treated as established disciplinary knowledge. Sources lacking identifiable authorship, institutional affiliation, or a traceable publication outlet were excluded. This strategy anchors the synthesis in contemporary evidence on the institutional transformation of Islamic schools (Saugi et al., 2025), although it is not a full systematic review (see the limitations of the study in the Discussion).

Analysis followed a thematic-synthesis technique: each selected source was read for its central construct, its operational definition of that construct, and any reported relationship to educational-management outcomes; constructs were then grouped into the five theoretical domains presented in the Results, and cross-domain relationships were inferred by comparing how independent sources described the same underlying mechanism (for instance, several independent sources converge on the claim that leadership behavior and organizational culture stand in a reciprocal rather than a one-directional relationship). Where a claim in the literature

rests on a single source or a small qualitative case study, this is noted among the limitations of the study in the Discussion rather than generalized as an established finding, consistent with the transparency expectations of a conceptual review.

C. Results and Discussion

This section is organized in two parts. The Results report the outcome of the thematic synthesis, namely the five theoretical domains on which the review draws, a synthesis table of the constructs, and the five propositions that link them. The Discussion then interprets these propositions against the wider literature, sets out their theoretical, practical, and international implications, and acknowledges the limitations of a literature-based synthesis.

1. Results

The thematic synthesis yielded five theoretical domains, presented below, and one outcome construct. Educational management effectiveness is treated here as the extent to which a madrasah's planning, staffing, evaluation, and resource decisions are transparent, consistently applied, and oriented toward educational quality while remaining consistent with its religious mission. This working definition is provisional and is meant to guide measurement in future empirical work (see the Conclusion).

Organizational Culture and the Competing Values Framework

The Competing Values Framework describes organizational culture through four archetypes (clan, adhocracy, market, and hierarchy) that differ in their emphasis on flexibility versus control and on internal versus external focus (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Schein (2010) adds a layered view in which artifacts, espoused values, and underlying assumptions together make up a culture. Traditional madrasah governance resembles a clan-dominant profile anchored in loyalty to a kiai or foundation leader (Miftahussurur et al., 2025). The culture transition examined in this review is the movement toward a blended clan-hierarchy profile in which relational trust coexists with documented procedure. Organizational culture has also been described as

the governance architecture of Islamic education management (Arifin & Arsyada, 2025).

Transformational-Spiritual Leadership

Transformational leadership comprises idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass & Riggio, 2006), and it is most often measured with the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Bass & Avolio, 2004). In Islamic institutions these dimensions are reframed through values such as khidmah, tawadhu', and uswah hasanah, a combination termed transformational-spiritual leadership in this review. Such leadership is described as integrating spiritual values, including amanah, justice, and deliberation, with modern management principles (Pujianto et al., 2025), and as part of hybrid leadership models that reconcile Islamic ethical mandates with the operational demands of modern educational administration (E. R. Amalia, 2026; Safrudin, 2025). Related work points to the alignment of Islamic epistemology with global management frameworks, for example through sincerity, spiritual discipline, and participatory decision-making in a noble-moral school climate (Pratama et al., 2026; Sabrifha, 2025), and to the integration of shura and amanah into administrative functions such as educational planning (Rini et al., 2025). Whether the spiritual reframing is a distinct causal mechanism or mainly a framing device remains open (see the Conclusion).

Teacher Career Adaptability

Career Construction Theory describes how individuals manage career uncertainty through four adaptability resources: concern, control, curiosity, and confidence, measured by the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). The construct is especially relevant to honorary (non-civil-servant) teachers in madrasahs, who must personally absorb the uncertainty of precarious employment.

Psychological Safety

Psychological safety is a shared belief that a team is safe for interpersonal risk taking, and it supports learning behavior in work teams (Edmondson, 1999). In schools, it has been examined as a link between transformational leadership and innovation (Bellibaş et al., 2024). In this review it is treated as a no-blame climate in which the leader's response to error is framed as organizational learning rather than personal fault.

Quality-Assurance Infrastructure

Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs supports the National Education Standards (SNP) with digital self-evaluation (EDM) and an electronic work and budget plan (e-RKAM), which convert standardized self-evaluation into needs-based budget planning (Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Islam, 2021). Implementation studies report both opportunities and challenges tied to digital literacy and change-management capacity (Firda et al., 2025; Firdaus et al., 2023; Ramadhina et al., 2024; Tawati & Muktiyasih, 2025), and policy analyses link performance-based planning and budgeting to accountability and educational quality (Perdana & Ritonga, 2026; Saugi et al., 2025). These instruments act as an interface between institutional management and wider quality reforms.

Read together, the five theoretical domains presented above do not point toward a simple additive model in which more culture, more leadership, and more adaptability independently produce more effectiveness. Instead, the reviewed literature, much of it based on single-site studies, describes reciprocal and conditional relationships: leadership shapes culture, culture in turn constrains or enables leadership behavior (Efendi, 2025), and both jointly determine whether an individual teacher's career-adaptability resources are expressed as visible innovation or suppressed by fear of sanction (Bellibaş et al., 2024; Efendi, 2025). Table 1 summarizes the five constructs synthesized in this review, their operational mechanism within madrasah governance, and their documented or theorized link to management-effectiveness outcomes.

Table 1. Synthesis of theoretical constructs, their operational mechanisms, and their theorized link to management effectiveness in madrasah institutions.

Construct / Domain	Operational Mechanism in Madrasah Governance	Theorized Link to Management Effectiveness
Organizational culture (Competing Values Framework)	Shift from clan-only compliance (loyalty to a figure) toward a blended clan-hierarchy profile in which relational trust coexists with documented procedure (SOP)	Fosters teacher professionalism through collaborative reflection and shared norms, creating a conducive learning environment for quality improvement (T. Amalia & Subiyantoro, 2025)
Transformational-spiritual leadership	Idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, each reframed through *khidmah*, *tawadhu'*, and *uswah hasanah*	Enhances leadership effectiveness and institutional governance by integrating spiritual values such as amanah, justice, and deliberation with modern management principles (Pujianto et al., 2025)
Teacher career adaptability	Concern, control, curiosity, and confidence exercised by honorary teachers facing employment precarity	Equips honorary teachers with adaptive resources concern, control, curiosity, and confidence to navigate employment precarity and sustain professional growth (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012)
Psychological safety / no-blame climate	Leader response to error framed as organizational learning rather than personal fault; open-door and two-way feedback channels	Enables teachers to engage in learning behavior, experimentation, and innovation by reducing interpersonal risk and encouraging open dialogue (Edmondson, 1999)
Quality-assurance infrastructure	Standardized self-evaluation converted	Institutionalizes the culture-transition process

(SNP, EDM, e-RKAM)	directly into needs-based budget planning, replacing wish-list planning	so it does not depend solely on one leader's tenure (Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Islam, Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2021; Firda et al., 2025)

From this synthesis, five theoretical propositions are advanced for future empirical testing. Proposition 1: The transition of organizational culture from figure-based to system-based compliance is positively associated with perceived fairness in staff evaluation and promotion. Proposition 2: Transformational leadership behavior exerts a stronger positive effect on teacher motivation in madrasah settings when it is explicitly grounded in shared spiritual meaning than when it is enacted as a purely secular managerial style. Proposition 3: Teacher career adaptability is positively associated with instructional innovation, but this relationship is conditional on, rather than independent of, the level of psychological safety present in the school. Proposition 4: Institutionalized quality-assurance instruments such as EDM and e-RKAM strengthen the durability of culture-transition outcomes beyond any single leader's tenure. Proposition 5: The joint presence of transformational-spiritual leadership, a no-blame climate, and standardized quality-assurance infrastructure is associated with higher management effectiveness than would be expected from their separate associations; that is, the three elements interact positively, so that the association of each with effectiveness is weaker when either of the others is absent (to be tested as a three-way interaction). Figure 1 maps the five propositions onto the model. This interdependency is consistent with findings that effective madrasah management requires a deliberate synthesis of modernity and spirituality (Bahri & Amir, 2026). Rahman et al. (2026) describe a related "Leader as Ecosystem Architect" model in which participatory vision-setting is grounded in a triad of shura, ijtihad, and amanah; it is compatible with, but not identical to, the propositions above. Hermawan et al. (2026) argue from an ecotheological perspective that effectiveness depends on aligning institutional strategy with ecotheological

values and a professional ethos of innovation and responsibility; this dimension is not modeled here.

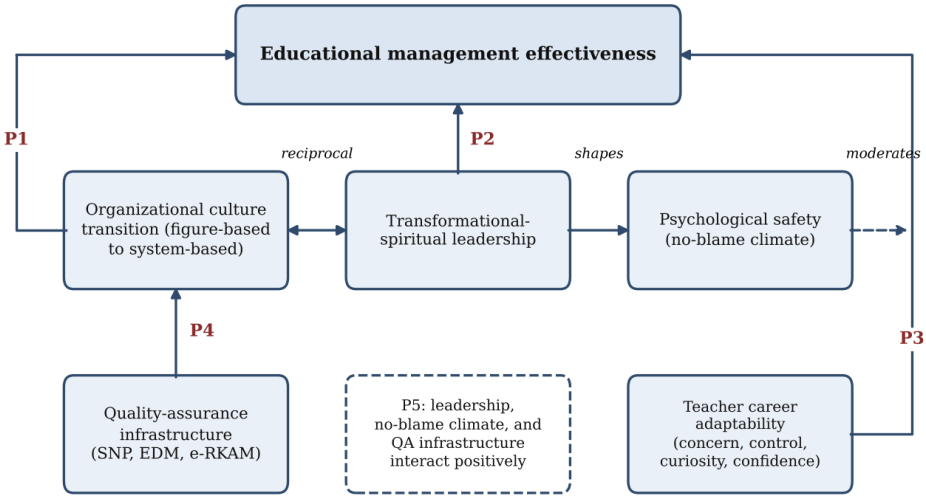


Figure 1. Integrative conceptual model of organizational culture, transformational-spiritual leadership, psychological safety, teacher career adaptability, and quality-assurance infrastructure in educational management effectiveness.

Note. Developed by the authors from the propositions advanced in this review. P1: culture transition is positively associated with perceived fairness in staff evaluation and promotion. P2: transformational leadership has a stronger effect on teacher motivation when grounded in shared spiritual meaning. P3: career adaptability is associated with instructional innovation, conditional on psychological safety. P4: quality-assurance instruments strengthen the durability of culture-transition outcomes beyond any single leader's tenure. P5: leadership, a no-blame climate, and quality-assurance infrastructure interact positively on effectiveness. Arrows to the outcome are drawn from the construct each proposition concerns; the intermediate outcomes named in P1 to P3 (perceived fairness, teacher motivation, instructional innovation) are not drawn.

2. Discussion

From Specific Synthesis to Broader Implications

The specific pattern identified in the Results, that culture, leadership, adaptability, and psychological safety operate as mutually conditioning rather than independent factors, carries a broader implication for how educational-management effectiveness should be theorized in value-based institutional settings more generally. Much of the transformational-leadership literature outside the Islamic-education context has already begun to call for closer attention to the moderating role of culture and personality in leadership effectiveness, rather than treating leadership as a universally portable style. However, in Islamic educational contexts, this shift necessitates a deeper integration of eschatological-transcendental values into the core of institutional governance to ensure that professional efficacy remains aligned with divine accountability (Umiarso & Muhith, 2019). This integration transforms leadership from a mere administrative function into a strategic pillar for institutional innovation, enabling madrasahs to effectively navigate the complexities of globalization while maintaining their unique ethical identity (Istikhori et al., 2026; Musaddad, 2025). Furthermore, the evidence suggests that by bridging traditional pedagogical heritage with modern governance tools, leaders can foster an environment where spiritual depth and operational excellence are viewed as mutually reinforcing components of institutional sustainability (Mahmudi & Aimah, 2025).

The synthesis presented here extends that call in a specific direction: it suggests that in institutions where identity and employment insecurity are simultaneously salient, as is the case for many honorary teachers, the moderating variable of greatest practical consequence is not personality but the psychological safety of the immediate work climate. Where earlier literature on culture in Islamic schools has tended to describe religiosity and communal solidarity as the primary explanatory variable for teacher engagement (T. Amalia & Subiyantoro, 2025) the present synthesis argues that religiosity and solidarity are necessary but not sufficient; without a parallel no-blame climate, spiritual commitment can coexist with, rather than resolve, resistance to instructional change among senior staff, particularly

resistance to unfamiliar digital pedagogy. Furthermore, bridging this gap requires moving beyond traditional authority structures toward a model where shura and ihsan explicitly inform the adoption of digital tools, transforming technological challenges into opportunities for collaborative institutional learning (Hussain, 2025).

A second broader implication concerns the relationship between policy instruments and organizational culture. The Ministry of Religious Affairs' EDM and e-RKAM platforms were designed primarily as budgeting and reporting tools, intended to reduce administrative burden and increase transparency (Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Islam, 2021). The present synthesis suggests that their significance extends further: by requiring joint evaluation among the school head, teachers, parents, and supervisors, these instruments create a recurring, low-stakes forum in which the culture-transition process described in Proposition 1 can be practiced routinely rather than imposed as an abrupt top-down reform. Where the existing literature on EDM and e-RKAM implementation has documented adoption challenges tied to digital literacy and change-management capacity (Firda et al., 2025), the theoretical model proposed here suggests that these implementation challenges are best interpreted not as purely technical obstacles but as signals of where the underlying culture-transition and psychological-safety conditions remain incomplete. Accordingly, prioritizing the professionalization of these evaluative forums ensures that digital integration does not conflict with core moral guidance, thereby maintaining institutional integrity during systemic transitions. Consequently, this transition necessitates a shift toward a TPACK+V framework that embeds technological innovation within the moral and spiritual fabric of the curriculum, ensuring that pedagogical evolution reinforces, rather than isolates, the school's foundational values (Azizah et al., 2025).

Practical Implications

Because the propositions are untested, the following implications are offered as reasoned starting points, not as evidence-based prescriptions. For madrasah administrators, the synthesis points to three linked practices:

formalizing decisions on promotion, workload, and budgeting into documented procedures while explaining their link to the school's spiritual purpose (Proposition 1); responding to error as an occasion for organizational learning rather than personal fault, supported by open-door and two-way feedback channels (Proposition 3); and giving honorary teachers visible opportunities for development and planning, since their career-adaptability resources appear to depend on the safety of the work climate.

For the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the discussion above suggests treating difficulties in implementing EDM and e-RKAM as indicators of where culture-transition and psychological-safety conditions are incomplete, and pairing the instruments with support for change management and digital literacy (Firda et al., 2025) and with training for principals in leadership that grounds management practice in shared spiritual meaning (Proposition 2). Because the instruments are intended to outlast any single leader's tenure (Proposition 4), joint evaluation among the head, teachers, parents, and supervisors should be protected as a routine forum rather than a reporting formality.

For foundation (yayasan) boards, the central implication is to anchor appointment, evaluation, and resource decisions in transparent, replicable criteria so that governance does not depend on personal loyalty to a founder or kiai (Miftahussurur et al., 2025), while retaining the value-based inheritance of khidmah and amanah as a source of moral legitimacy. Boards can also reduce the uncertainty faced by honorary teachers through clear contract and evaluation criteria, which complements the adaptability resources teachers bring themselves.

Limitations of the Study

This review is subject to methodological limitations inherent to a conceptual/library-research design; these limitations concern the scope and nature of the evidence base, not personal or administrative matters. First, because the article synthesizes secondary literature rather than collecting primary data, the five propositions in the Results remain theoretical and have not been subjected to statistical or triangulated qualitative testing; they should be read as hypotheses for future research rather than as established

findings. Second, several of the Islamic-education sources drawn upon are single-site qualitative case studies (for example, studies situated in one Islamic secondary school or one madrasah), which limits the generalizability of specific empirical claims cited in support of the broader theoretical argument, even though the theoretical constructs themselves (transformational leadership, the Competing Values Framework, career construction theory, and psychological safety) are each supported by a substantially larger cross-national evidence base. Third, the search strategy, while systematic, was not a full systematic review with dual-reviewer screening and a registered protocol; source selection therefore retains an element of purposive judgment, and some relevant literature, particularly recent Indonesian-language sources not indexed in the databases searched, may have been omitted. Fourth, the integration of Islamic spiritual constructs with a predominantly Euro-American management theory base carries an inherent translation risk: terms such as khidmah or tawadhu' may not map perfectly onto the leadership behaviors described by Bass and Riggio (2006), and future empirical work should treat this mapping as a hypothesis to be tested rather than an established equivalence. Fifth, part of the evidence on spiritual leadership comes from non-educational settings, such as small enterprises, and the concept of Islamic leadership remains theoretically contested, so its transfer to madrasahs is itself a hypothesis (Islam et al., 2021; Nugroho & Pratiwi, 2023). Finally, the reviewed evidence is concentrated in a limited range of cultural settings, so these frameworks need validation across broader contexts (Suryadi et al., 2024). Consequently, broadening the scope of inquiry to include non-English language studies and more diverse institutional settings is essential to refine the global applicability of these spiritual leadership models (Subhaktiyasa et al., 2023).

D. Conclusion

Educational management effectiveness in madrasah institutions cannot be adequately explained by organizational culture, leadership style, or individual teacher resilience in isolation. This conceptual review has

argued, on the basis of a synthesis of organizational culture theory, transformational leadership theory, career construction theory, the psychological safety literature, and the quality-assurance policy literature, that these constructs operate as mutually conditioning determinants: cultural transition is expected to create the procedural space within which transformational-spiritual leadership can be exercised consistently rather than personally, leadership in turn is expected to shape whether teachers experience their work climate as psychologically safe, and psychological safety is expected to determine whether individual career-adaptability resources are converted into visible instructional innovation or remain latent under the pressure of employment precarity. Indonesia's EDM and e-RKAM instruments offer a concrete, government-endorsed mechanism through which this transition can be institutionalized beyond any single leader's tenure, but their effectiveness, this review suggests, depends on being implemented alongside deliberate cultivation of a no-blame climate rather than as a stand-alone administrative reform. The five propositions advanced here are offered as a starting point for empirical validation; until tested, they represent a theoretical contribution intended to sharpen, rather than settle, the academic conversation on how spirituality, culture, and modern accountability can be reconciled in the governance of Islamic educational institutions.

The propositions advanced in the Results are, by the nature of a conceptual review, untested and should be treated as hypotheses rather than findings. Future research should prioritize three directions. First, a multi-site, mixed-methods design combining survey measurement of the Competing Values Framework, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale, and an established psychological-safety index, together with qualitative case narratives, would allow direct empirical testing of Propositions 1 through 5 across madrasahs of differing organizational maturity (state madrasah, pesantren-based madrasah, and integrated Islamic schools). Second, longitudinal designs are needed to establish causal direction between leadership behavior and culture change, since cross-sectional studies in the reviewed literature cannot distinguish whether

leadership shapes culture, culture selects for a certain leadership style, or both operate reciprocally over time, and because leadership–engagement links differ across countries (Li et al., 2020). Third, comparative research examining whether the spiritual reframing of transformational leadership identified in the Results produces measurably different outcomes from a purely secular managerial style, holding other conditions constant, would help clarify whether spiritual grounding is a genuinely distinct causal mechanism or primarily a framing device layered onto an otherwise universal leadership process. Finally, investigating the meso-level interplay between administrative governance and the unique pedagogical values of madrasahs will determine if such spiritual frameworks can be formalized into scalable models of effective educational management (Arnold & Sangrà, 2018). Furthermore, examining these adaptive strategies through the lens of hybrid human–machine ecologies may clarify how religious institutions navigate the digital era without compromising their core ontological commitments (Khanom et al., 2025).

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